

# Prisoner of War

by Dachande663

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Summary: A child with only hate for the world. An elite hated by all. Life, War, Faith, Hope, Despair, Death. COMPLETE.

## 1. I

Well this is my second FanFic and I must say I like how this one has started, sort of similar to Reconciled Brother, only the opposite. I hope you like this one as much as a lot of you liked my last one. I'll probably finish it very soon seeing as how I have no school now.

This chapter is short, but to compensate that I've put chapter two up straight after it. As usual, read and enjoy. And review if you have the time.

# Prisoner of War

## Chapter 1 : Redemption Part I

The orange suns cast a fiery gaze upon the city. The late summer winds gently blew along the ruined streets. Overhead a massive Covenant cruiser hung in the skies, its organic curves hiding the deadly weaponry poised to rain down super heated death. Ground troops of both sides, dug into the rubble of what was once a magnificent city, engaged into a continuous guerrilla battle. The Covenant, with their superior numbers and weaponry slowly pushed the humans back, exterminating them with a cruel efficiency. Banshees screamed through the skies, mopping up lone stragglers, the sounds of their weapons overwhelming the screams of dying mothers and children.

A small band of men moved silently down the side of what was only a few days ago the main high street. Each carried a weapon, be it a high power hunting rifle, or simply a heavy object. Around them shots rang out into the air, mixed with the smell of fire and death. Up ahead a group of jackals stood around two elites, obviously waiting for orders. The men moved up silently, taking cover behind burnt out cars. When they were within twenty feet the leader stopped and called

his men forwards. He opened his mouth to begin talking, but nothing came out. Looking down he saw blood seeping through his shirt. Falling forwards, the others saw the hole the plasma shot had burnt through his back. Before they could react the waiting Covenant ambushed the group. They screamed, one man tried to run and was picked off by the same Covenant sniper who had shot their leader. Soon only one boy was left, he couldn't of been more than sixteen. As the gold clad elite walked up to him the boy trembled visibly. A foul stench reached the elites nose and he looked down to see the human had urinated on itself. Flicking his wrist a plasma sword flashed to life, bringing it down to within inches of the boys face the elite whispered, "I will kill you, not because my Gods wish it or my Superiors command it. But because you are the most pathetic thing I have ever seen."

Reaching down the elite grinned in the reflected blue wash from the plasma sword.

## 2. II

### Prisoner of War

#### Chapter 2 : Imprisoned Freedom

Caleb slunk silently through the shaking buildings, he had no fear, this would be just like normal. He heard the bark like chatter of a few grunts and lay his back against a half exposed staircase. Slowly they moved away and Caleb returned to his task.

At only seventeen Caleb was as fit as he could be given his conditions. The war was hell for many people, death for many more, but for a few it was an opportunity. If Caleb stopped and thought about what he did he might frown upon his life, but morals were something quickly forgotten in his line of work. Being a thief you could have no remorse for your victims.

Ahead lay the Covenant camp, frantic grunts and jackals moved between elites of varying ranks, none of them noticed a small human child sneaking towards their base of operations.

Reaching the camp Caleb slowly moved in between mountainous crates of weapons, ammunition and supplies. Spotting a tasty looking pair of rifles Caleb quickly pocketed them along with as many grenades as he could carry. Creeping around a pillar like box of carbines Caleb looked out at the centre of the base. A gold elite was conversing quietly with a black elite, both looked pleased with something. The black elites head twitched ever so slightly and Caleb darted back behind the crates. In a low crouch he hurried back the way he came. A loud crash came from behind him as a grunt tripped over one of the discarded weapons Caleb had been looking out. The odd creature looked up and screamed a startled surprise. Springing to his feet Caleb turned to run, but hit solid air. Shaking his head he looked up at the materialising form of a black elite.

Reaching down for him the mighty warrior held Caleb by his throat, feet dangling wildly. As Caleb turned blue and the world faded to darkness, the elite smirked and said "Thieving scum," before throwing him to the ground unconscious. Calling forwards to blue clad elites, the black elite kicked Caleb hard in the ribs before he was dragged

away to the purple gravity lift.

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Raule Fuaz'Haw lay silently on his bunk, the sound of his brethren's slow rhythmic breathing filling the air. Tomorrow he began his first day of duty on board the Sorrowful Awe. Training had been hard, he was very lucky to pass, but knew that his skills, or lack of, would prevent him from reaching the battlefield to kill the humans. His father would have been deeply disappointed, but he had already left the world, denied the privilege of entering the Great Journey in his afterlife. Was he up there now Raule thought, ensuring his only child failed as well.

Sighing gently in the room he looked sideways at the chronometer set into the wall. He still had over two hours until he had to rise. Two hours compared to the seventeen cycles he had endured so far. Quietly climbing down and donning his armour, Raule left the barracks to wander the ship, something he had been doing for a while now. Walking along corridors he had to bow his head to every elite he met; he was the lowest of the low in his caste at the moment. Even grunts and jackals seemed to give him little respect. Two elites walked past the other way along the corridor, dragging an unconscious human between them. Raule lowered his head and kept on walking past.

When Raule returned to the barracks some of the other fresh warriors were beginning to stir. Not wanting to wake them Raule carefully moved back to his hard bed using all the stealth he had. Lying back upon the frame he had only to wait five units before the lights snapped on and the elites began to wake properly. Still wearing his armour Raule waited for the elite below him to leave before hopping down. His hands were not their usual oily self, they felt dry and trembled slightly as he looked down at them. He was last to leave the barracks, trailing behind the others.

Soon they arrived at the main command room, the tall vaulted ceilings stretched above the room, which was abuzz with activity. There commander, clad in glistening white armour, moved between the warriors giving them their units and duties, Raule stood last in line as per usual. The commander glanced back down at Raule's name when he stood before him, he gave a murderous look to the young elite before informing him that he would be working in the brig, under Commander Ketame. Raule bowed his head before leaving the room, he felt the glare of the commander follow him as he passed through the folding doors.

Brig duty was considered one of the worst onboard any Covenant ship. It was surpassed only by cleaning the intake vents and cooking for the many crew, both of which were usually reserved for grunts. But Raule knew it was the best he was likely to have got, not that it made it much better. Entering the first brig section of the ship, Raule headed towards the first block of cells. Sure enough, there stood a commander in gold armour, though Raule noticed it did not gleam as strongly as others of the same rank. Walking forwards quickly he bowed his head in front of his new commander and awaited a response. After a brief pause during which Ketame glanced over Raule, the commander spoke in a rough voice.

"You are Raule Fuaz?" he questioned.

"Yes sir," Raule replied, already he knew where this was going.

"Raule Fuaz'Haw?" Ketame asked with a look into his subordinates' eyes.

"Yes sir," Raule replied once more.

"Well well well, they give me a dishonourable runt like you. As to be expected. Tell me boy, who in your ancestry earned you the disgrace? Who was it who necessitated the addition of Haw?"

"My father Sir. He, he was an honour guard for the Prophet of Joy, butâ€|"

"Go on," inclined Ketame, interested in how the young elite had received the disgraceful Haw in his family name.

"He was caught with one of the High Priestesses, he was executed on High Charity and the name passed down to me."

"Your father was obviously weak of heart and faith. Let us hope you have only inherited his name runt," with that the commander turned to the control panel set on a small pedestal at the rear of the cellblock. Raule followed quickly, not wanting to give his commander more reason to hate him.

"You will work in block four, you will be in charge as most of my warriors have been reassigned. There are only two grunts with you, but if you have any trouble with the humans then you don't deserve to be in the mighty Covenant."

With that the commander dismissed Raule who immediately left and headed for the fourth door along the hall. Upon entering he looked over his new domain, two grunts were sleeping with their backs against the pillars stretching to the ceiling. Walking to the far end Raule looked over the prisoner manifest, only one human was currently in his charge he thought gladly. The less he had to do the better.

Moving to the right side of the room he looked in upon the lone human. It was the same one he had seen earlier. The young boy was lying face down on the floor, breathing slowly obviously asleep. Looking down to his side, Raule saw one of the two grunts standing there silently.

"Sir," it said in a high pitched voice, "my name is Nila and that Hujo. You new commander?" it asked finally.

"Yes," Raule replied looking again at the boy.

"Goodie goodie," said the grunt moving back over to its partner.

"Yeah, goodie," Raule murmured to himself casually walking over to stand by the pedestal. This was going to be his life from now Raule thought to himself, 'why father' he questioned subconsciously, 'mother was your true life partner and you had to throw everything away for your sordid affair.'

Raule spent the rest of the day following the same line of thought, his shift was over at twenty hundred units. Only nine hours to go.

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The air smelt different, alien almost. Caleb awoke with a start, but quickly lay back down, his eyes never opening. His body was screaming at him, his ribs writhing in agony every time he breathed, the harsh lighting burning into his eyes so accustomed to darkness. Running his fingers over the smooth surface of the ground beneath him Caleb's heart sunk, he must be onboard a Covenant ship.

Finally opening his eyes Caleb's suspicions were confirmed, before him lay a shimmering wall of plasma. Rolling onto his back he looked up at the bare ceiling above him, if only to distract from the obvious. He was going to die here. Smirking Caleb sat up very slowly, his bruised chest accompanied by dark marks on his arms from where he had undoubtedly been dragged.

The smirk had not left his face; Caleb had always known he was going to die, just like most people. The only difference was he accepted it. He had nothing to live for, no one to cherish and no hope of a future. So he lived for the moment, taking what he needed and just scraping an existence. The slight humming of the plasma wall faded and Caleb looked into the face of his keeper.

"Eat," the elite said simply, sliding a bowl of what looked like entrails into the cell before re-activating the shield.

"You expect me to eat that bluey?" Caleb exclaimed, kicking the dish away. The elite spun around and returned to the cell.

"I expect you to be grateful human, that during your last few days you won't die from anything as dismal as hunger." With that the elite turned once more and strode away.

"Yeah well I'd rather take death over eating that," Caleb called after him. After a while though the smell of food began to make Caleb's stomach ache. Looking at the disgusting mess on the floor he reached forwards and grabbed a chunk of what looked like sausages. He was used to living on the street, living off peoples waste, but thisâ€¦. He put the food to his mouth and took a bite, immediately he spat it out, causing the brown blob to skid across the smooth metal, as it hit the plasma it vanished in a small crackle of energy. Moving the rest of the food to the wall soon Caleb was left only with the mess caused by the juices of the food, the rest having joined the first piece.

The elite walked up to his cell again and looked at the mess on the floor, following the stains he quickly worked out what Raule had done.

"So you do not like the food I bring you?" he stated more than asked.

"Are you deaf you walking piece of crap," Caleb shouted before he could help it, "I don't care what you put in front of me. I'm going to die, on a full stomach or starving I don't care." The elite just stood resolutely on the spot, staring at Raule.

"Then I shall not bring you any more," he said quietly before turning away. Caleb watched the mighty warrior walk away with something of a droop in its shoulders he had not seen before. A feeling rose up inside of him, but before pity could do anything Caleb crushed it into the back of his mind along with remorse. The elite was the enemy, he kept telling himself.

That night Caleb slept uncomfortably on the cold metal floor, the lights, once bright and harsh had been turned down so that only the plasma walls lit up the room. Shortly before Raule had fallen asleep the elite left to be replaced with another who took up his position by the raised section at the end. Caleb rolled over in his sleep, dreams of death and murder swirling in his mind mixed with the events of the last few hours.

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Raule returned to cellblock four the next day, relieving the night guard who didn't say anything as he left, only staring at Raule with the murderous look he had come to expect from being a disgraced warriors son. Looking into the only occupied cell Raule saw the human lying on the floor, his face turned away from the room. Nila was standing beside the control panel checking the system as he approached.

"Has the boy talked since I left," Raule questioned the small grunt.

"No sir, boy no speak," Nila replied before moving away from the panel to allow Raule full access. "Sir?" the little grunt asked.

"Yes," Raule spoke not looking down.

"What that?" Nila asked, pointing to a large pouch attached to Raule's armour at the waist.

"None of your concern," he simply answered. The grunt fell silent, he knew not to pursue to matter. Turning his back on the grunt Raule removed the pouch and pulled from it some of the rations he had deposited at breakfast. It wasn't a crime taking food to eat later, but what he was about to do could be taken as one.

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Caleb awoke just like the morning before. The feelings of pain and been in an alien environment overwhelming him for a few moments before the realisation sunk in. For a long while he didn't move, choosing simply to feign sleep staring at his hand outstretched beneath his head. Occasionally there were the sounds of doors opening, shields flickering on and off; screaming. But Caleb just lay where he was, the world falling away around him as he fell apart inside.

Eventually he rolled over, still feigning sleep, and looked between narrowly closed eyes into the prison. There were the two grunts, either sleeping or moving around. And there, standing perfectly still was the elite, he was simply looking at the doors at the end of the room, never blinking or glancing elsewhere.

Caleb's stomach growled angrily at him and he closed his eyes trying to wish away the pain it was causing him. He had been hungry when he was taken, for he had not eaten properly in a week, but now, now he was in chronic pain. Determination could only hold you so far. A single tear trickled down the side of his face.

Opening his eyes slightly once more he saw the blurred outline of two large, powerful legs standing before him. The shimmering wall faded and the still blurred legs stayed motionless.

"You said you did not wish to eat any of the 'crap' I gave you human," the elites voice rang out, "I see your determination to fend off help and I hope you don't consider this crap or help."

With that the legs bent down and two hands placed a small blue container on the ground, before the elite walked away, reactivating the plasma shield. Caleb did not know how to react, should he look inside and possibly find something to quench his thirst and hunger, or should die with what little dignity he had left. Eventually though, Caleb realised that whatever dignity he had would die with him when his body slowly digested itself in order to survive just that bit longer.

Moving slowly at first he reached out and pulled the blue container towards him. The top folded off silently and peering inside Caleb emptied out the contents. A bottle rolled out onto the floor, followed by an assortment of unusual objects including balls of various sizes and long rectangular bars each giving off a distinctive smell. Looking up to ensure none of the grunts or the elite was watching Caleb opened the top of the bottle and tipped a bit of the liquid inside into his mouth. It tasted like sweetened water and Caleb hastily gulped down half the bottle.

Moving onto the food like objects, Raule picked up a small ball about the size of a squash ball and put it to his nose. The smell reminded him of a scotch egg, only the bluish colour put him off. Taking a small bite he let the material float in his mouth before chewing and swallowing it. He tried desperately to place the taste but nothing in his limited repertoire of foods and tastes came to mind. The outer layers were soft and chewy, almost like a well done chicken, the inner core there was almost liquid and flowed deliciously across his mouth. Picking up a different ball Raule hurriedly placed in his mouth and bit down. Coughing he spat up the vile ball and stared at the rainbow like puddle it made, the vile aftertaste already filling his mouth. Picking up a bar Raule was once again cautious and nibbled a bit of one end of. The outer layer was sweet and tasted like candy, but the centre had little to no taste at all, however it was very filling. This was obviously an energy bar of some kinds he thought to himself and he slowly ate his way through it.

Soon the entire container had been emptied and Raule lay back, his head resting against the wall, slowly sipping at the bottle. A deep grunt broke the silence and Raule looked up quickly to see the elite standing on the other side of the plasma.

"Thank you," he said quietly, the first time he had ever said those words in his life. The elite simply looked down at his hooved feet before speaking.

"I cannot risk feeding you again human," he stated, looking at his indistinct reflection in the metallic floor, "That will have to hold you for a while."

"My name is Caleb," Caleb stated looking at the top of the elites helmet, "And I'm used to living off nothing."

"You are a thief no?" the elite asked picking his head up and looking imploringly into the boys eyes. Caleb took his turn to hang his head now, no matter what society or race he entered, thieving would always be frowned upon.

"I stole to live," he stated bluntly.

"So the end justifies the means?" the elite said, stepping closer to the plasma, curious to hear how this child had grown up doing so many wrongs.

"I don't have to justify anything to you," Caleb shouted, standing up for the first time since he arrived, the old pains flaring up. "Just because you gave me some food you think I'll explain myself to you! You couldn't understand me you blue blooded bastard."

"Shut your mouth human," the elite shouted, but Caleb stood his ground.

"Come in here and make me!" he taunted, holding his arms out at his sides.

"Stupid, pathetic, weakâ€¦"

"What!" screamed Caleb. "Your just gonna' insult me? Kill me first, it's agony."

"I will notâ€¦" the elite stammered, his hands clenched into tight fists at his side, shaking from the power stopping him from striking the human. As he stepped back Caleb moved up to the shimmering plasma wall.

"You're the pathetic one," he whispered, before lying back down on the ground and closing his eyes. The elite stepped away from the cell, kicking away one of the grunts that came to him. Caleb slowly closed his eyes and grinned to himself, this battle had been won, who cared about the war.

### 3. III

#### Prisoner of War

#### Chapter 3 : Broken with a Heart

The quiet serenity Caleb had come to almost enjoy was broken by the sounds of exertion and resistance. Cracking open his right eye Caleb watched as men, women and children were dragged into the room. They looked like they had been through hell, the men in particular all sported wounds and looked to be in constant pain. Two hunters came in last and stood by the door blocking any chance of escape.

The elite Caleb had insulted moved forwards to speak to one of the



elites standing near the front of the new prisoners before splitting up the group and placing them into cells. Quickly counting the rough number of people he sighed, great, he would probably have to share.

The shimmering wall crackled away and Caleb opened his eyes to see a young girl giving the elite holding her hell. She kicked at him repeatedly before he roughly backhanded her and threw her against the far wall of the cell. He reactivated the plasma and moved away. Caleb just lay where he was, ignoring the sobs coming from the other occupant of his cell.

Eventually all of the people had been locked away, Nila and Hujo moving along the sides counting the number of tenants. Caleb moved his head forwards and looked around the corner at the elite standing proudly in the centre of the room. Eventually, when the sobs and cries had died down he spoke.

"Human filth, while you are here you are under my command. Be silent, co-operative and well-behaved and you shall come to no harm." With that he turned and took up his usual post by the rear of the room. The girl next to him continued to sob and Caleb sighed for what felt like the millionth time today before trying to get more sleep. But before he could even begin to let his thoughts settle something moved over his outstretched legs. Looking up he saw the girl trying to get to the door. She looked to the right and saw the elite standing there. Clearing her throat she called out.

"Errrrr, exx excuse me Sssir." From his vantage point Caleb watched as the elite moved over quickly, trying to intimidate the young girl. When he stood before their door he simply stared.

"Ccc could I hhave some www water," the girl asked, her stuttering becoming unbearable. The elite looked down at Caleb and sported an unmistakeable grin.

"You're going to die, on a full stomach or starving I don't care," he said, still not moving his gaze from the girl. She fell back crying, but still the elite stared at Caleb. He mouthed the words pathetic before the elite turned and left. The girl was watching the pair of them through her tear-streaked eyes.

"Here," Caleb muttered, rolling the last of his water bottle towards her. She caught it and finished off the small amount left slowly. Before she could say anything Caleb rolled over onto his side and kicked himself repeatedly inside his head.

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Raule walked slowly down the corridors to the dining halls, his mind still screamed at him to do something, anything, to sort that human boy out. Picking up a tray of rations he sat by himself in the corner of the large room, watching the others of his race over the top of a nutri-bar.

A group of elites Raule recognised as the ones who slept in his barracks pointed over in his direction before heading for him. Raule sighed and put his bar down.

"Hey Haw," the most prominent elite said, "We've been hearing a few

things from the Ungoggy. You don't mind do you?" he said taking a piece of meat from Raule's plate.

"Anyway," he said, chewing voraciously on the meat, "We heard you've been a bit soft on those human dungs. Tell us it ain't true Haw?"

"I do my duty, just like you," Raule simply stated, tired of the conversation.

"You babysit those humans like they were infants! They're scum, destined to be wiped from this galaxy, and you're no better than them."

Raule's hands clenched beneath the table as he locked eyes with the elite in front of him.

"I do my duty," Raule merely stated again, his voice quavering with anger, the elites standing around him started laughing, "I don't give a dam how the humans feel."

"You better," the elite stated as he and the others left the table. Raule rested his fists on the table, his blue blood dripping slightly from where his fingers had clawed open his skin. Even now the anger coursed through his veins.

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Yuk' Samane stood guard in the cell block, watching over his charges until morning when he was relieved. Ahead of him the doors hummed briefly before sliding apart, stepping forwards he saw his relief walking towards him; nine hours early!

"You are not supposed to be here," he called to Raule.

"Wait outside," Raule simply said to the elite.

"But," the elite started.

"Go!" Raule half shouted, half whispered.

The elite looked back at the room before leaving quickly through the doors Raule had just entered. As they closed shut Raule walked forwards until he was inline with Caleb's cell. Placing his hand on the panel to the side, the iridescent wall of plasma faded away. A young girl brought in earlier lay against the back, sleeping restlessly. Caleb lay in his usual place at the front of the cell. Grabbing the humans hair Raule dragged him out, shaking him out of any slumber he may have had.

"You little worm," Raule whispered holding Caleb's ear to his mandibles, "Now you're going to realise just how pathetic you are."

He dropped Caleb to the floor and planted a solid kick in his stomach, sending him flying to the other side of the room. The boy tried to rise but Raule rushed forwards and brought his elbow down on his back, hard. As he grabbed one of the child's legs blood fell from his mouth. Raule's smile just widened.

Caleb tried to speak, but all the wind had been knocked out of him,

Raule kicked him again and again, twisting an arm behind the humans back he pulled it up until he heard a scream and then a snap. Caleb fell panting to the ground, but Raule was not done yet.

Many of the occupants of the cells were moving forwards now to watch the brutal attack. Some of the women cried out in pain for the boy, others simply looked out with a sense of hopelessness.

Raule lifted the boy up once more by his hair, pushing his face right next to Caleb's he whispered, "Had enough?" Caleb's eyes moved up from the floor to look into Raule's. "Why, you getting tired?" he choked out, knowing that it would prolong the pain, but not caring about anything now.

Raule roared and smacked Caleb so hard across his face that two teeth came skidding out. Stepping over the kneeling boy, Raule grabbed his neck and pushed his face closer to one of the plasma screens. The people inside looked on in terror as Caleb's face drew nearer and nearer to the crackling energy.

"Go on," he spat out along with a mouthful of blood, "I dare ya' "

Raule pulled him back and continued to throw him around like a rag doll, banging of walls, skidding across floors, until eventually, over an hour later, he drop kicked Caleb into his cell. The girl next to him rushed forwards to attack, but Raule hit her full force in her chest. She crumpled to the ground and didn't get up to fight again.

Placing his hand on the panel Raule turned and walked back out the doors to the brig, his fellow elite returning and looking at the scene of blood upon the floors.

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Caleb screamed in his mind. This was pain beyond pain, agony beyond agony. He had felt pain before, but this was an all encompassing, unrelenting, brutal assault upon his senses. His eyes must be swollen for he couldn't open them much if at all, every breath he took caused a fire to burn throughout his chest and his left arm hung limply by his side. 'God I was an idiot' he thought solemnly to himself.

From beyond the darkness a voice cooed to him, he felt gentle fingers running over his wounds. Ribs of pressure stemmed the bleeding and he was grateful to whatever angel was looking over him. He had never been a religious person, such beliefs didn't put food in your stomach, but right now he knew that someone was looking after him, mortal or god, it didn't matter.

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Ayla gently moved the boy into a more comfortable position, wiping away from the blood from around his head she proceeded to bandage him up using bits of his and her clothing. He groaned slightly as she ran her fingers over his ribs, the blue swelling already lining his skin.

What had he done to deserve such treatment, or did that elite simply want to vent his anger. Maybe he would systematically beat each and

every one of them until there was no fight left in them.

No, she couldn't think like this, always look on the bright side her mother had told her as a child. Gently lying the boy down, she moved back against the wall and fell asleep watching him rest peacefully in agony.

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Raule felt liberated that night as he lay in his bunk. His body was slightly stiff from the sudden exertion, but his mind raced. That little piece of filth wouldn't trouble him anymore and if he did he knew what to expect.

From the doorway two elites walked in, talking to each other in quiet whispers, one of them motioned towards Raule before proceeding down the centre aisle.

That night Raule slept soundly, a grin never leaving his face.

When morning came Raule strode down to the dining halls, he was walking on air, nothing could touch him. Waiting in line for his rations an unfriendly voice spoke up from behind.

"I didn't know Haws could fight," the voice spoke, Raule turning to see the same elite that had insulted him yesterday.

"You obviously don't know many Haws then," he said, keeping his voice neutral.

"Orica told me what you did to that human," the elite continued, "I didn't know you had it in you." Looking into the bigger elites face Raule noticed a faint trace of approval.

"I said I do my duty," he whispered.

"And I never said you didn't brother," the elite smiled clapping an arm around Raule's shoulders, "Name's Naguzi Coghashu."

"Raule, Raule Fuaz'"

Naguzi cut him off before he could say Haw, "To me you've earned the right to lose that part," he said picking up two plates for him and Raule. "Here, I owe you one," he said dropping a lump of meat onto Raule's plate.

"Thank you," Raule said, walking away with his new brother.

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Oh God, the pain was unbearable. Caleb sat up slowly, his head swam in and out of consciousness, his vision blurring.

"Whoa, lie back," a voice spoke through the mists. Caleb could not resist and so slumped back against the cold hard metal of his cell.

"Www what happened," he asked, pressing his hand against his forehead and feeling several bruises across his face.

"You got the crap beaten out of you," the voice answered quietly, "You're lucky he stopped," the voice whispered. Even in his weakened state Caleb could tell it was a girl, it must have been the one from before he thought groggily.

"Lucky," he finally whispered, "yeah that's me." He rolled his head to the side and looked at the girl next to him. Her dirt streaked brown hair was cropped to just above her shoulders, her face showed a history of what she had been through, dirt, blood, sweat and tears all streaked the delicate skin beneath.

"My name's Ayla Mikailis," she said softly, looking into his face sweetly, "But everyone just calls me Eli."

"Caleb," he replied, "Just Caleb."

"Well hi Caleb," she said setting her back against the wall next to him, "So how long have you been in here?" she inquired trying to break the ice.

"A while," he replied, truthfully unsure of the time that had elapsed since his capture. She just grinned sheepishly and rubbed at her chest. Opening his eyes a bit more, Caleb looked at the bruising beneath her thin shirt.

"Oh this," she said, looking down where Caleb was staring, "Don't worry about it. It's nothing. Honest." She moved her hand up to her face and flicked a few loose strands of hair out of her brown eyes.

"You think we're gonna make it out of here?" Eli continued, already bored of the drab prison.

"No," Caleb answered, his eyes shut once more.

"That's not very optimistic," Eli replied.

"That's life," Caleb retorted.

They sat in silence for a few minutes, Caleb trying to overcome his pain and Eli thinking about her hopes for actually surviving this ordeal. The more she thought about it though, the more the boy next to her seemed to be right.

"You have a family?" Eli asked quietly, hoping to change the subject.

"No," Caleb answered, still not looking at her or anything else.

"Covenant get em?" she enquired carefully, not sure how he would take her prying.

"No," he answered once more, but before Eli could ask, Caleb continued. "My father was in the rebel forces, he was fighting for the freedom of our colony when the UNSC sent in a strike force. My father died in hard vacuum when some marine big shot thought they would blow the main airlock on the asteroid he was stationed on to escape. He's still floating out there, preserved, sick as that is."

Eli winced listening to the story, she never expected this.

"My mum and I were relocated to a civilian settlement here. She started drinking, got addicted to tranquilisers and overdosed one day. No letter, no kiss goodbye. I came home from school one day to find my mother slouched across the sofa, vomit down her chest, her eyes rolled back into her head. I was only six."

"Woah," Eli quietly whispered, never taking her eyes from Caleb. He turned to look at her, his eyes looking straight into hers. The blue was a shocking contrast to the darkness around his face.

"I ran away that night from a temporary orphanage. I've been living on the streets for over a decade now, more than half my life."

"Haven't you ever wanted a family though?" Eli asked, looking imploringly at Caleb.

"I had one," he answered, "You can only ever have one true family. So, what's your story," he asked looking around at the other cells, "Anyone here related to you?"

This time it was Eli who slunk back against the walls, closing her eyes to stem the tears. Caleb was unmoved by the show of emotion, his face remaining solemn.

"By that I'm judging you had one and then it was the Covenant that got 'em" he followed up. Next to him Eli nodded her head slowly, wiping away at the tears tricking down her cheeks.

"Well think of it this way," he continued, "Soon we'll both be with our families again." Eli turned on him, her face showing disbelief.

"Are you serious! Christ, you're such a bastard. We're stuck in some covie' cell and you're acting like we're already dead and that it's no big deal!" Caleb grinned slightly at her outburst.

"Number one, my parents were married so I'm not a bastard. Number two, we are going to die in here so get used to it. And number three, I don't care whether I die or not because either way I have nothing."

Eli sat against the wall shaking her head, glancing between Caleb and the cells outside their own. "How can you live your life thinking that," she finally whispered, as much to herself as to Caleb. After a long pause Caleb finally rested his head in his hands and spoke.

"I lost everything that's ever mattered to me. That can throw your life in perspective."

Eli didn't reply, she looked lost in her own thoughts and emotions. She eventually moved back over to the far corner of the cell and lay against the metal wall, her knees pulled tight to her chin. Caleb hadn't moved, his body was half asleep and half restless, the wounds still fresh and sore, though the bandages had helped. A startled gasp from Eli pulled Caleb from his peace, looking up he saw the elite standing before the plasma field, grinning at Caleb upon the floor.

Shaking his head, Caleb returned once more to his own peaceful slumber.

"What's the matter human," the elite spoke up, its voice jubilant yet quiet, "no retort or insult? Maybe you've learnt that you are pathetic."

Caleb shook at the elites words, yet he knew he could not survive another beating like before. As the elite turned and walked away Caleb was struck with a sudden thought.

"I'm sorry," he whispered quietly after the monsters retreating back. There was the tiniest pause in his stride, and then the elite was gone from view. Caleb sighed slowly and rested once more. From behind him, Eli spoke up.

"Why did you say that?" she asked softly. Caleb sighed, the old memories he tried so hard to repress, to make himself seem less humane, came flooding forwards.

"Five years after I ran away I was doing alright. When you've been out for that long you learn how to survive, you learn not to trust or rely on anyone, you care only for yourself."

"Sounds kind of lonely," Eli commented, listening intently.

"My mom always said 'we live as we dream, alone'. But when you've been out that long, you just accept it, scavenge what you can, steal the rest. It's not pretty, but it's a living."

"Anyway, five years in, doing ok, and this little kid came up to me one day. He said he had been moving from city to city, looking for someway to survive. He wanted to partner with me, work together so we could both do well."

"And what did you say?" Eli asked, already knowing the answer.

"I told him to shove off and make a nice home in a ditch," Caleb answered.

"You could have been nicer," Eli said softly.

"I needed to survive, I couldn't spend my days watching and feeding some little kid. Besides, he took my advice literally. I saw the police pulling his body from a road-side ditch a week later. He had been beaten up by one of the rival gangs in the area, what little he had taken from his bleeding body. That was the first time I had felt emotion since my mum died and I vowed never to let it happen again."

"I don't get it though," puzzled Eli, "What does this have to do with that elite?"

"All he wanted to do was help me, and I as good as put him in another ditch," Caleb answered looking down at the floor, "what he did to meâ€¦ I deserved it."

"Don't say that," Eli spoke moving closer to him, "you didn't ask for that attack, no matter what you said or did it couldn't of been cause for what he did to you."

Caleb smiled looking up at Eli's face. "Thank you," he finally said.

"What for," she asked with a grin, "I'm just saying the truth. Besides, that kid was innocent and that elite isâ€|"

"What?" Caleb interrupted, "Just because he's fighting on the opposite side makes him a criminal."

"I didn't say that," Eli replied.

"But you were gonna' say that."

"Why are you defending him, then even, all of a sudden. You of all people should hate their whole race right about now."

"I just don't care any more," Caleb answered with a sense of defeat in his voice, "I've got nothing left to fight for anymore."

"You've still got yourself," Eli said shifting closer to him, "and now you've got me."

"And that's incentive enough to live?" Caleb asked with a smirk.

"More than," Eli whispered, snuggling up against him. Caleb drew in a sharp breath as Eli touched his bruised ribs, but quickly pulled her closer to him with his right arm.

"Anyway, you never did tell me what happened to your family," Caleb spoke softly into Eli's ear, brushing away her hair.

"Dad was UNSC, killed at Reach. Mom was killed when our group was ambushed as we were moving to the evacuation point. So was my littleâ€| so was my little bro," Eli finished, a small tear trickling from her eye.

"How old was he," Caleb asked, with actual concern for Eli now.

"Six," she said quietly, placing her head on his shoulder, "Tim," she whispered into Caleb's chest.

"You miss him?" Caleb asked.

"Every second."

"You really want to live, even though you've lost 'em?" Caleb said slowly.

"They would of wanted me to," Eli replied.

"Wish I could feel like that," Caleb said.

"Maybe you can."

"Yeah," Caleb said with a small chuckle, "and maybe we can get out of here alive."



"You never know," Eli said with a grin, "I've heard of people escaping from these places."

"Sure, with the legendary Spartans," Caleb said nudging Eli lightly, "you really think we got a chance in hell of getting out."

"If I haven't got hope, what else can I hold on to?"

Caleb gently stroked his hand through Eli's hair and spoke with determination for the first time since he had been captured.

"I'm going to get us out of here."

#### 4. IV

##### Prisoner of War

##### Chapter 4 : Final Absolution

The cell block was near silent as Raule quickly walked up to his commander, Ketame, and bowed his head. The golden elite looked down at him, the previous hate for having a Haw under his command reduced to a lesser degree, yet still evident.

"How has your first week being?" he asked, looking down over the report Raule handed him.

"Uneventful Sir," Raule replied.

"Certainly," Ketame said looking into Raule's face. "You fail to mention a certain event on here, one which your night relief did note."

"That was not on my watch Sir."

"Yet it was you who committed the crime," Ketame spat into Raule's face.

"I did not know it was a crime to punish the humans," Raule said calmly, adding Sir onto the end. Ketame glared into his subordinates' eyes.

"It is of no consequence now, the hierarchs have given the command to cleanse the humans from this ship before we leave the surface."

Raule drew in a slight breath at these words, was it relief or dread he did not know.

"You are to deal with the ones in your block, if you require assistance then call for one of the other warriors. There is no reason to hog the fun," Ketame finished with a grin.

"Yes Sir, I understand," Raule said quickly.

"Very well, we shall start the cleansing tomorrow, when the sun breaks the horizon, the carcasses are to be left by the grav lift. No need to worry about the mess, the orbital ships are going to glass the planet after we head off. You may leave."

"Yes Sir," Raule said, turning on his hoofed foot and departing through the gliding doors.

As he walked along the short hall bordering the seven cell blocks Raule leant against the smooth metal and dry heaved for a few moments. Why was he so nervous all of a sudden, hadn't he always known this moment would come. Or did he hope some other individual would have to perform the acts. Running his hand over his mandibles Raule let out a low sigh and continued down the hallway.

-

Caleb was resting against the cell wall as the doors hummed apart and the infamous elite strode in. Humans nearest to the plasma shields shuffled backwards as he made his way to the pedestal at the far end, afraid of his wrath.

Rubbing his chest slightly Caleb was careful not to disturb the sleeping Eli next to him. His left arm still hurt awfully, the way it was bent Caleb knew it was broken and leaving it in this awkward position would cause a lot of damage in the long run.

The elite began conversing quietly with the two grunts by the pedestal, their demeanour changing instantly, glancing around the humans surrounding them. As they shuffled back to their usual sleeping spots Caleb glanced at the elite. There was something new in the eyes today, another emotion past the pity and anger he had seen so far, this was something worse, a sense of foreboding. Caleb's mind raced to find possible answers for this behaviour, but his mind was weak, exhausted by his incarceration. Eli stirred slightly against his shoulder, rolling over he lifted his arm and rested it against her chest. God she was beautiful he thought silently, damming his years of loneliness for denying him any intimate relationships.

From the other side of the shimmering plasma screen the big elite walked by slowly, he seemed to be pacing the room, barely looking into the rooms he passed. He was constantly moving one of the tusk type things on his face, almost like he was frustrated. As he walked by again Caleb slowly looked the other way, into Eli's face to avoid having to talk with his personal demon.

"It's quiet," a voice spoke softly from his chest. Caleb looked down at Eli who had shifted into his lap. "Anything happen," she asked groggily.

"Nothing to report," Caleb answered tracing a finger over her cheeks, "I just wanted to let you rest."

"You're so considerate," she replied grinning with her wide smile. Caleb's own face split into a grin as he watched her.

"And him," she asked, looking out over to the still pacing elite, "Any change."

"No," Caleb said slowly, "butâ€¦ well I think something's eating him up. His just been pacing since he came in."

"Nerves," Eli put forward.

"Because of what though?" Caleb asked, curiosity over taking him.

"I dunno'," Eli answered, looking back up at Caleb, "Why do you want to know?"

"I don't know," Caleb said truthfully with a sense of quiet defeat in his voice, "it just looks weird seeing an elite acting all nervous. Makes me nervous."

"Ahh," Eli said sweetly stroking Caleb's face, "I didn't think you got scared."

"My first night on the streets, that was scary. I had no money, only the clothes I was wearing and not a clue as to what to do. I sat in a doorway until I got moved by the police, pouring with rain I ended up under a bridge, rats scurrying around me as I tried to sleep."

"And what happened," Eli asked curiously, listening closely.

"I didn't get any sleep that night, or the next. Eventually I ended up on the opposite side of town in the industrial district. Found an old warehouse and made myself a kind of den in a store room. I stayed there for a long time, moving out at night to get what I needed, a lot of the bigger factories made tonnes of waste, old boxes, shredded paper, stuff that was perfect for keeping me warm and comfy. Of course you can't eat paper so I had to resort to."

"Stealing," Eli interrupted.

"Come on," Caleb protested shyly, "I had to survive."

Eli sighed gently against Caleb's lap, debating the moral dilemma in her own mind.

"Did you ever want a new family though," she asked quietly.

"I told you," Caleb began, but Eli cut him off.

"I know what you said. But when you were all alone in that store room, did you ever wish you had a new family to be with, even if they couldn't replace your true parents?"

Caleb leant his head back on the wall and mulled over the question, his mind screamed at him to say yes, but his stubbornness kept it at bay.

"Have you ever wished you didn't have a mum or dad?" Caleb finally asked, trying to turn her question.

"Well, yeah," Eli replied slowly.

"Well it's kinda the same, only you flip it around. When you're sitting in a corner, the rain lashing against the thin roof over you, you kinda miss having a mum to be there to hold and comfort you. When you see the other kids playing football with their dads you get jealous, but then you realise fate dealt you a crap hand and you accept it."

"If only you had come past my place, I would of."

"What," Caleb interrupted this time trying to keep his voice low and neutral, "take me in? Think about it, the only reason you're talking to me now is because we're locked inside a prison cell. If you had seen me go past your house your dad would of told me to shove off."

"I guess you're right," Eli said slowly, her eyes almost tearing up.

Caleb didn't compound the fact by saying 'I told you so' but he knew that she understood what he meant. From outside the cell the elite walked past once more, Caleb looked up slowly, the mighty beast walked with a definite slouch and Caleb could tell something was troubling it. The elite looked momentarily into the cell and Caleb quickly diverted his attention back to Eli, when he looked up again the elite had moved on.

"Maybe you should just ask him what the matter is," Eli put forwards, more of a joke than a suggestion.

"Nah, somehow I don't think he'll take too kindly to that."

"Anyway, you got any idea how we're going to escape?" Eli questioned, much more quietly now.

"None," Caleb answered honestly, "I haven't got the strength to attack the elite, I can't spot a single weakness in this room, and the plasma is wellâ€¦ plasma."

"So no hope then," Eli said sounding deflated.

"I thought you were the optimistic one," Caleb said trying to cheer her up.

Slowly, Caleb looked round out of the door, an idea exploding to life in his head.

"Ifâ€¦" Caleb said silently, his mind racing.

"What?" Eli asked quickly, watching Caleb think furiously.

"I can't attack the elite right," he said looking back at her.

"Right."

"What about the grunts, they're tiny."

"But even if you could get at one, the elite would step in straight away."

"Exactly!" Caleb exclaimed, his mind almost literally lighting up with his idea, "What does that elite do everyday?"

"Iâ€¦ don't know," Eli said slowly.

"Half way through his day he leaves for twenty minutes doesn't he. Lunchtime, rest break, I don't care. All I know is that for twenty minutes it's just us and those grunts."

"Ahh!" Eli said catching onto Caleb's plan.

"He's only just arrived so we don't have to wait until tomorrow as well," Caleb said slowly, watching the pacing elite.

"But why not wait, work things out a bit more," Eli put forward. Even though her suggestion was valid Caleb knew why they couldn't wait.

"Every moment we stay here we get weaker. And by the way that elite is acting I don't think we can expect a three course meal anytime soon."

"So today then?" Eli asked, sitting up next to him.

"Yep, listen. Here's what you're gonna have to do."

-

Hujo looked across the room, his small paws clacking against the cold metal beneath him. On the other side of the room Nila slept peacefully, his head bobbing up and down rhythmically. His methane tank resting against one of the rooms' pillars. Raule would be back soon Hujo thought, glad that he would be able to rest as well.

From one of the rooms a violent sound erupted. Waddling over as fast he could Hujo stared into the cell. A female human lay upon the metal, her body convulsing wildly, screams of agony and pain coming from her alien face. Hujo rocked back and forth on his feet, unsure what to do. The male with her moved up to the plasma shield and started shouting at Hujo. He could barely understand their language, his few lessons covering only basic commands.

"What is wrong," Hujo asked in his native tongue, motioning towards the sick woman. The human merely continued to shout, the woman screaming behind him. He was pointing now, from Hujo to the woman. He wanted him to come in! Hujo shook his head, a clear sign of no. The female screamed again, louder and louder, higher and higher. Hujo could take no more. He waddled to his partner and told him to quickly deactivate the shields for the cell. As Nila moved off Hujo returned to the cell in question.

The woman was lying deathly still now on her stomach by the far wall, her absence of screams leaving a hollow silence. As the plasma crackled and dissipated Hujo drew his pistol and advanced into the cell, never taking his aim from the male.

He kicked the woman lightly with his foot. She didn't move. He turned to look at the male, as he did he felt irrevocable pain shoot through his head and the world seeped away from him.

-

Caleb watched as Eli pushed the grunt away from her, the bottle he had gotten yesterday lodged through its skull. She had spun from her prone position and driven the small cylinder through its skin with such force that part of the bottle poked out the other side, dark purple blood flowing freely from both wounds. As Eli pushed the small body away from her Caleb peeked around the side of the cell. The other grunt stood nervously by the control panel, his eyes fixed onto

the entrance his partner had just entered. Walking back to the dead grunt Caleb shook his head in disgust, not only for what he saw, but what he had to do.

Placing one foot on the neck of the dead creature he used both hands to yank the bottle free. It slid out smoothly. The purple blood glistening on the surface.

"Stay here," he whispered to Eli, picking up the fallen plasma pistol as well.

Caleb knew he could just as well charge the pistol and effectively vaporise the small creature, but he couldn't do that. Not yet at least. Hefting the canister in his left hand Caleb arched his back and threw the projectile clear across the room, it banging as it impacted above one of the other cells.

The grunt swivelled to follow the object, as soon as his gaze, and gun, pointed away from the cell Caleb ran full pelt straight towards the little alien. When he was within six feet the creature turned to look at him, shock plastered over the foreign features. Dropping into a slide tackle Caleb ploughed into the grunt, both of them rolling to the ground in a heap. Quickly springing into a crouch Caleb grabbed the grunt and held it up of the floor, its little body twisted violently trying to break free, but after a while it gave up and hung limp in Caleb's hands.

Standing up straight Caleb walked over to the control panel, the grunt held in front of him. He lifted the creature and pointed it towards the cells, then the panel. It got the idea as it tried to raise one arm. Caleb let his grip loosen and then tighten as it pulled a stubby arm free. Taking another step forwards he let it touch the panel. Just before it could make contact Caleb pulled it backwards and turned it to face him. Squeezing it harder it gave a small yelp and Caleb hoped it got the idea; no funny business. Once again letting it near the panel, the small grunt pressed a quick series of buttons and the cells lost their shimmering fourth wall. The people inside stood quickly and walked out cautiously. Moving over to the newly freed captives, Caleb handed the grunt to a strong looking man in military fatigues.

"You want me to kill it or keep it," he asked in a thick Russian accent accepting the still grunt.

"You decide," Caleb said walking off to Eli who now stood by the panel, his plasma pistol bulging out of his pocket. Picking up the other one he turned to look at the people assembled before him.

"Does anyone here have any experience with Covie weapons?" he asked over the quiet murmurings.

A few choruses of 'I do' rang out so Caleb quickly passed the two weapons to those who he thought looked most capable.

"You're not keeping one for yourself," Eli asked quietly at his side.

"I've never shot a gun in my life, much less an alien one. Better to have some skill behind the trigger."

"I suppose you're right," she answered, "So where do we go from here?"

"Home," Caleb said, beginning to walk through the small crowd.

-

Raule walked back quickly from the dining halls. He was running late, too concerned with his own musings to notice the time. As the doors parted he stood stock-still.

The usual glow of blue plasma was void. Propped up against the far control panel, two prone forms lay in a puddle of violet liquid. Cursing himself, Raule turned and sprinted back the way he had come. He ran full pelt past Commander Ketame's cell block, he ran down the long hallways, following the tiniest scent in the air, the smallest drop of red blood on the ground. He would hunt these humans down himself, or it would be his corpse by the grav lifts in the morning.

## 5. V

### Prisoner of War

#### Chapter 5 : Judgement Day

'This place is a maze.' Caleb moved quickly, but quietly with the group. Around them doors led off to other corridors or rooms, a soft purple glow seemed to emanate from every wall and the whole ship hummed with an endless vibration. The group of men, women and children had been slithering through the endless halls for over twenty minutes and they had not even found so much as an arrow pointing to a way off of the ship.

One of the marines armed with a weapon peered around a corner ten feet ahead of the main group. He instantly held up a balled fist, even though Caleb or any of the other civilians had never joined the armed forces, they all knew it meant stop. Slowly the large Mexican moved around the corner, a few seconds later a muffled thump came and he reappeared before them nodding. As the group proceeded along they passed the body of a dead grunt lying propped up against a side panel, its methane tank slowly hissing as it let out a fine stream of super chilled gas.

"Where the hell is the exit?" one man called out from the pack. Others mumbled their agreement at his statement, but no one could provide an answer. Turning another familiar looking corner one of the younger enlisted men gasped, looking along the left hand wall. As one the entire group turned to face him, but he simply walked forwards pushing past them, his fingers running over the surface of the wall.

"What is it?" Caleb finally asked, as much to silence the stares as to know what was peeking this mans interest.

"These doors," he said, running his fingers over tiny grooves in the metal surface, "the large buttons, big icons above. I think these are

life pods."

A murmur of excitement ran around the group at these words, but Caleb stepped forwards to stand beside the man.

"Can you open them?" he said quietly.

"Wellâ€¦" the mans fingers brushed over a large glowing panel, instantly the metal door slid into the side of the wall on silent runners. Looking in the man nodded, sure of his judgement.

"Ok, you carry on down the hall opening the doors," Caleb said turning to face everyone, "The rest of you, pile into these pods. Hurry and be quiet."

At once the hall was a flurry of motion, the lone man who had probably saved their lives ran down the hall, his hands brushing each panel as he went. Within sixty seconds everyone was sitting on the oddly designed benches in the life pods. Running back along the corridor the man who had opened the doors proceeded to show each pod group which button to press to start the engines, but only on command. As soon as a single pod detached the Covenant would know they were here, they had to leave as one.

Watching everyone get ready in the pods, Caleb drew a deep breath and literally screamed "Now!" The sound of doors slamming shut, explosives detonating and small pods rocketing forwards filled the corridor. Caleb ran forwards, Eli waiting for him in a pod directly across the hall. His head snapped backwards when he was still three feet from the entranceway, the doors slamming shut before his eyes, sealing Eli inside with the lone man who had been everyone else's saviour.

As his eyes stopped watering Caleb looked up into the shimmering form of an elite, as the active camouflage fell away Caleb felt his life plummet away just like the escape pods.

"You," was all he could manage to say as the beast reached down for him. The large hands wrapped around Caleb's tattered clothes and he was brutally forced to stand. For what felt like an eternity the two just stood in the corridor, their eyes boring into each others as if they could fight without even having to raise a weapon. In the distance the ship was brought to life, alarms filtered down through the walls and the ship seemed to awaken from its slumber.

From the remaining sealed pod desperate hammering echoed out, Caleb finally glanced in its direction and sighed; at least Eli was safe. For now. The elite stepped closer to Caleb and drew his rifle from its holster, the act slow and deliberate.

Caleb began to rise slowly, gripping the metal wall for support. Watching the struggling human, Raule grinned broadly, he may have lost the other humans, but this one would not escape him. Reaching down he grabbed the boy by his emaciated clothing and held him so that their eyes were level.

"My only regret human is that you won't be able to hear your female scream as I tear out her heart."

The words hit Caleb harder than any blow, he lashed out wildly, but



the elite simply swatted him aside, laughing at the weak act of defiance. Staggering backwards, Caleb began to cry, his body racking from the sobs. He dropped to his knees and cradled his head in his hands. The elite moved forwards, gently placing the rifle atop the humans head.

"Weak," he sneered before tightening his grip on the trigger. Caleb roared, an act of aggression and violence brought on by a primordial rage. He would not let this elite live, he could not afford it, Eli had to live. He launched himself from the floor, both hands together forming a fist that smashed through the lower mandibles of the elite. Never pausing Caleb dropped onto the fallen elite and rammed his elbow down hard on the throat, felt the bone and cartilage crack, the re-assuring gurgle coming from the elite's now badly wounded mouth.

Pushing the human off Raule lurched awkwardly, clutching at his neck. His hand swiped to his hip, groping for his rifle. Then in a moment of blind panic he remembered he had took it out already andâ€¦

Caleb picked the weapon up slowly, running it through his hands as he moved towards the elite. Stopping before he came too close, he grinned and pointed the rifle at the aliens head.

"Feel familiar?" Caleb mocked.

Raule simply dropped to his knees, his hands in front of him and began whispering sacred prayers his mother had taught him long, long ago.

"No God can help you now," Caleb whispered.

The elite looked up at this, his dark eyes fearful. He held out his hands, palm up.

"Finish me human, show you are not weak."

"I won't give you the satisfaction," Caleb replied simply before firing a single shot at each outstretched hand. Raule howled in agony, but Caleb knew it was enough.

"I'll let your own kind deal with you," Caleb said before turning and opening the escape pod. "And in case you're not strong enough for thatâ€¦" Caleb tossed the rifle near to the elite before entering the pod. Raule lay motionless, cradling his severely damaged hands. He heard the loud thud, knew the pod had ejected and felt all his hopes fly away with it.

Picking up the weapon gingerly Raule wondered what his father had felt when they had tried and sentenced him. It couldn't of been this bad. Noises now, from either end of the long hall, they were coming, and they would kill him for what he had done.

Placing the rifle between his mandibles, Raule began to cry, everything lost, nothing left to live for. As the others neared him he took one final breath and pulled the trigger.

Nothing. In the final moments, Raule realised Caleb had played a final trick on him. The rifle had been out of charge, dead, empty. But then another thought shot through his mind; how could Caleb have

known. He had given the weapon away believing it to still be functional.

They were close now, so very close. A grunt waddled into view, it approached cautiously, a wounded elite an unnerving sign. Raule sat up, motioning the grunt closer. When he was within range, he grabbed the pistol hanging loosely in the grunts grip. Before the small creature could comprehend what was happening Raule had shot it.

And then himself.

-

Caleb felt the sudden jolt of gravity, then felt what little food he had try to escape from his stomach as gravity fell away. He was free, and what's more, he had saved Eli who now lay nestled in his arms.

Nothing mattered any more. They were free. Going wherever the pod took them. As long as they were together.

## 6. VI

### Reconciled Brother

#### Chapter L : Redemption Part II

The boy was crying now, moaning endlessly for his mother, but she would not come. She had already departed this world. Turning up to look into the disgusting face of the elite the young boy stopped crying. His whining subsided, his body stopped trembling. His face twisted into a chilling vision as the elite watched dumbfounded. Then the boy began to laugh, a wild cackle that froze the warm summer air. The down on the back of the commanders' neck prickled, his heart began to pump furiously against the cold he felt. The boys eyes rolled in his head, scanning the world around him and boring into the elites soul.

From behind his back the boy activated the two plasma grenades he had stolen earlier, laughing once more he lunged forwards. His arms swung around and both grenades stuck to the gold elite in front of him. The elite stood still as he looked down at himself. The glowing balls on his chest and the boy impaled on his still outstretched sword.

As the child died he grinned once more and whispered "You took all I had and made me human," before the twin blue suns ignited, vaporising all in the vicinity.

End  
file.